

To the Chief Highways Officer

Date:

Subject: Review of Gating Order – Back Stratford Terrace, Beeston

Electoral Wards Affected:

City and Hunslet

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call In

Not Eligible for Call In
(Details contained in the report)

Executive Summary

Leeds Community Safety (LCS) is promoting the installation of gates across *Leeds* to temporarily close highways suffering from persistent levels of crime and / or anti-social behaviour (ASB). As per the current legislation, LCS has carried out an annual review of the Alleygating scheme and any associated Gating Orders to a carriageway in the City and Hunslet ward (see Appendix 1 – photos).

1.0 Purpose of this Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Chief Highways Officer of the outcome of the annual review and to support the recommendations made in the review.

2.0 Background Information

2.1 Section 129A to 129G of the Highways Act allows for the making of a gating order to temporary closure a highway in response to high levels of anti-social behavior. The legal provision came into effect on 1st April 2006. The adopted status of the highway is unchanged by the order.

2.2 *Gating Orders (Nos.2 &17) were granted for a carriageway in the City and Hunslet ward. Gating Order No.2 was granted on 10th July 2007 and Gating Order No.17 was granted on 18th April 2008. As per requirements set out in the relevant legislation within the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005, it is the responsibility of the promoting department to carry out an annual review of the gating order to assess its use in reducing persistent crime and / or ASB.*

- 2.3 As per any gating order to a relevant highway, the status of the highway shall remain unchanged. As a result of the review carried out, recommendations can be made by the promoter to either:
- Continue with gating of the Highway for a further period of time (to be specified);
 - Continue with the gating but keep gates locked open for a period of no less than 3 months to allow for monitoring of the site and to establish if there is further need for the gates; or
 - Revoke the gating order and remove the temporary restriction.

3.0 Main Issues

3.1 The review process - methodology

- 3.1.1 The review process will need to take in several factors in order to satisfactorily assess their use and value. The first stage of the review process is to obtain both recorded and reported crime and ASB adjacent and adjoining the site under review for the 12 months before and 12 months after the gating order came into operation.
- 3.1.2 The views of the local Neighbourhood Police Team Inspector must be obtained in order to assess their opinions regarding the gating order.
- 3.1.3 The views of local ward members should also be gained.
- 3.1.4 A postal consultation, lasting no longer than 28 days, should be carried out with a random selection of residents affected by the gating order(s) unless numbers affected are low enough in order to enable consultation with all affected residents.
- 3.1.5 Where possible, a site visit should be carried out in order to gain a greater understanding of the effect of the alleygates in the area under review. This should take in factors including the appearance of the gated site, any damage to gates, whether gates have been left open, etc.
- 3.1.6 **Please note: Gating Order No.2 has not been reviewed before as it was felt that it would be better to review it once the second part of the carriageway received its gating order. Therefore both gating orders are being reviewed within this report.**

3.2 The review process – outcomes

- 3.2.1 **Crime Statistics** - The primary reason for the gating up of a highway is to reduce the opportunity to commit acquisitive crime which includes:
- Domestic burglary
 - Burglary other (can include sheds, outbuildings, etc)
 - Robbery
 - Vehicle crime

Alleygating is not exclusively used for these issues and can often be associated with the reduction of other crimes and Anti-Social Behaviour. It is also used to reduce environmental issues such as flytipping and littering.

- 3.2.2 The crime stats for the review area have been obtained for the 12 months BEFORE the gating order (April 2007- 2008), and 12 months AFTER the gating order has been in place (April 2008-2009) (see appendix 2- crime stats).

- 3.2.3 Recorded Acquisitive crime across Leeds for the period 12 months after the gating order was 6% up on the figure recorded 12 months before the order (from 31,746 recorded acquisitive crimes to 33,625) . **Please note: recorded ASB figures were unavailable for request and hence do not figure in this report.**
- 3.2.4 Recorded Acquisitive crime for 2008-2009, across the City and Hunslet ward was also up on the year before by 46% (from 1,642 crimes to 2,404 crimes). In comparison, recorded acquisitive crime for the gated streets actually fell by 12.5%.
- 3.2.5 It is unclear just how great an impact alleygates have had in this area and on the fall in crime. Whilst most respondents to the consultation wanted the gates to remain in place, many stated that gates were often left open and used incorrectly. With this in mind, it is difficult to say whether the alleygates have been a good or a bad initiative for the area.
- 3.2.6 In terms of individual Acquisitive crimes for which alleygating is particularly used for, burglary dwelling in the review area climbed slightly by 17% (from 6 to 7), damage to dwelling dropped by 38% (from 13 to 8), theft from motor vehicle fell 50% (from 2 to 1), and theft of motor vehicle rose by 300% (from 1 to 4). There was one recorded Robbery in the review area before and after the gating order. Damage to motor vehicle saw a drop of 22% (from 9 down to 7).
- 3.2.7 A comparison of the figures for individual acquisitive crimes in the review area with that across both the city and the ward reflects very little difference. Burglary dwelling was up 13% across the city whilst across the ward, it has risen by 81%. Unfortunately, Burglary dwelling also increased in the review area which suggests that the gates are indeed being left open, hence leaving the rear of properties vulnerable to sneak in burglary attempts.
- 3.2.8 Only two crimes dropped in the review area that increased across the city and the ward. These were damage to motor vehicle and theft from motor vehicle. As the majority of vehicles are kept on the main front street, it is hard to attribute these reductions to alleygating.
- 3.3 **Consultation** – Consultation was carried out with a random sample of 100 properties directly affected by the gating order. There were a total of only 22 replies received, of which 16 were in favour of keeping the gating order in place for a further timescale and 6 opposed to the gating order (see Appendix 3 –resident comments sheet). Due to such poor response, it is difficult to say what the correct views are of the majority of residents, and it would be beneficial to carry out a door-to-door consultation, before deciding if residents support or oppose the gates.
- 3.3.1 Despite the poor response, those respondents in favour commented that the area felt more secure and that it had become a safer place for children to play.
- 3.3.2 Of the six residents opposed, the main concern was that the gates were often left open and if closed, were used by children merely as goal posts.
- 3.4 **Ward Members** – Ward Members were asked to feedback on their thoughts regarding the alleygates. All ward members are in favour of the gating order remaining in place for a further period of time.
- 3.5 **Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT)** – The NPT Inspector has been asked to comment on the gating order. The NPT are in favour of the Gating order remaining in place.
- 4.0 **The Review Process – Conclusions** (see Appendix 4 – table of considerations)

- 4.1 The majority of respondents to the review were in favour of the gating orders remaining in place for a further period of time, but no less than a further year from the end of the current gating order period (April 2009). Both the ward members and the NPT also support the gating orders for a further period of time.
- 4.2 Although there has been a drop in recorded acquisitive crime since the gating order was enforced, there is a clear indication that the alleygating scheme in the area needs further assessment and consideration. On the whole, Alleygates have been welcomed by local residents as a key crime reduction tool, making a noticeable difference in the area, yet there appears to be issues with the gates that cause concern for residents and which hinder the crime reduction potential of the gates. For this reason, and in the hope that recorded acquisitive crime and ASB will continue to fall in the area, Leeds Community Safety is supportive of the gating order remaining in place for the remaining 6 months (up to the next review date April 2010), allowing for issues raised by residents to be addressed and then assessed.
- 4.3 Should these issues persist and public opinion regarding the gates grows more opposed to the scheme, Leeds Community Safety will begin the process of revoking the gating order and removing the gates.

5.0 Recommendations

- 5.1 The Chief Highways Officer is requested to:
- i. Note the content of this report; and
 - ii. To approve the continuation of Gating Order Nos. 2 & 17 as recommended by Leeds Community Safety for a further period of 6 months and then to carry out a further annual review in 2010.